

# The Future of the Co-operative Movement

Alexander F. Laidlaw, 1972

## THE FUTURE OF THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT <sup>+</sup>

### I

#### Introduction

I was indeed pleased to receive your invitation to be present this evening and speak at the closing session of this leadership course of the Rochdale Institute. I have read with great interest the prospectus of the Institute and learned that it was established here in New York many years ago by prominent Americans dedicated to the cause of cooperative education. I can hardly imagine any project or institution more important than this for the sound development of cooperatives. We have generally been careful in the movement to set up reserves and encourage investment to protect the capital resources of cooperatives, but we have not done nearly so well in protecting our human and intellectual capital against depletion. It is liable to depreciate too!

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<sup>+</sup> An address given on January 17, 1972 by Dr. A.F. Laidlaw at the final session of a leadership course of the Rochdale Institute, New York City, a centre for Cooperative Studies chartered by the Regents of the University of the State of New York.

Yes, I am glad to be in this gathering of cooperators on this happy occasion. Perhaps some of the younger ones here are trying to establish my vintage. To save you the trouble I shall tell you that I started to earn my living as a small town school teacher just a few weeks before the disastrous stock market crash of 1929, and I got my first taste of the cooperative idea in the early 30's in Nova Scotia almost 40 years ago. So at least I have experience spanning many years of exciting times.

Another reason for my pleasure at being here is that many Canadians interested in cooperative housing have long been admirers of United Housing Foundation and its fine projects, though most of your undertakings are much too large and complex for us at this stage. For some years we have had annual group visits to UHF and some of your leaders, especially Harold Ostroff and Don Martin, have been speakers at several co-op housing conferences in Canada. There is tension and lack of understanding between the governments of the United States and Canada today, but there is unbounded goodwill and agreement between cooperators of our countries. Perhaps the only way to achieve universal peace and goodwill will be eventually through worldwide cooperation.

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Yes, we have drawn much inspiration from you. The younger ones among you may not have heard that the first cooperative housing project in Canada got started under the guiding hand of a New Yorker, Mary Arnold, whose name, I assure you, is still remembered in Cape Breton, where she laid the ground-work for Tompkinsville 35 years ago. Not long ago I picked up her little book, The Story of Tompkinsville, and I read these stirring words:

"Would you have strong, free, self-reliant people. Then put tools in their hands and let them build. Credit unions, cooperative stores, cooperative houses, these are the tools with which they may fashion their lives. The cooperative idea is as old as man and still a dream of what men can do.

"It is not supermen we need but ordinary men and women to travel the cooperative road. Let them provide credit for themselves, grow food, organize stores, and build houses and they will provide for themselves and the materials for a fuller and richer life. And they will do more. They will build themselves and in so doing will build a newer world on the foundations of the old."

It required courage and vision to think like that back in the grim days of the 30's, but it is this same kind of courage and vision we need today in these dangerous times. Back in those hard times, Father Jimmy

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Tompkins in Nova Scotia used to have a short motto for young men who came to him for advice about their careers. He would say: "Live dangerously!" That is the spirit we must have in these dangerous times. We must be ready to live dangerously because we believe in something, as Mary Arnold and Jimmy Tompkins did.

The title I have chosen for my talk tonight is "The Future of the Cooperative Movement". Note that it is not "The Future of Cooperatives" but "the Cooperative Movement", for I firmly believe it is not just cooperatives we need, but a movement. I insist on what may appear to some to be a rather old-fashioned expression, "cooperative movement", because for me it carries three important connotations. First, it somehow implies people, not just lifeless organizations; second, these people are pushing forward, they have convictions and goals; and third, "movement" tells us that various kinds of cooperatives are going forward together -- the people are moving ahead, united on all fronts under the banner of cooperation. I realize that united action in a total movement is difficult to attain, but it is an ideal which we must keep before us.

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It is well for us to stop and assess this movement of ours as we are doing tonight, because we must turn a searchlight on ourselves regularly and examine in critical fashion what we are doing and how and why we are doing it. It would be very foolish of us to suppose that the cooperative movement is assured of automatic growth and progress in the years ahead, that great numbers of people are going to turn instinctively to cooperatives just because some of us think that they are very good things. Life is never going to be that easy for us; in fact, I suspect that the road ahead may be pretty difficult for cooperators. Perhaps that is another reason why I wanted to be here tonight, to help in a small way to prepare you for the trials ahead.

## II

### The World We Live In

The proper rôle for the cooperative movement has always been, and still must be, not only to provide better organization and services for people, but also to correct and improve on the existing economic and social environment. We cannot do this unless we understand the realities of the world we live in, the conditions or institutions we would replace. So let us briefly examine and assess what we see about us today.

In one of Browning's poems there is a song of sheer delight sung by a little girl who is overjoyed with everything in sight, ending with the lines:

"God's in his heaven —

All's right with the world!"

All's right with the world! We would find it pretty hard to sing such a song today, for surely all's not right with this world of ours. There is just too much to be sad and pessimistic about. It is easy enough to say that

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we must be optimistic, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to give good reasons for optimism.

Indeed, our world today can be best described as a sick world, in the sad lines of Keats:

"Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs...."

For around the earth we find consuming hatreds, war, destruction and brutality, festering injustice and perverseness among men. I say "perverseness" because our age, more enlightened, I presume, than any previous age in history on the right things to do, seems bent on doing the wrong.

Racial animosities are increasing rather than decreasing among the peoples of the earth, fanned over and over again by "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago." The gap between rich and poor does not narrow but grows ever wider. The number of illiterate people, for all our much-talked-about literacy campaigns, is greater now than it was ten years ago. In one nation

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after another, democracy is in retreat, even in the land which gave us the word "democracy", until now there are virtually whole continents that know not democracy at all.

In many parts of the world, hunger, disease and physical suffering are the daily lot of the great majority of the inhabitants. It is frightening to think that today there is less food per person in the world than there was ten years ago, for food production now is hardly keeping pace with population growth. Most of the great metropolitan centres of the world, from the viewpoint of the quality of human life, are fast becoming unlivable. Pollution of the earth, air and water resources has now reached the point of actual struggle for survival, especially in the more affluent countries. All the while, with the proliferation of modern weapons of fiendish destructive power, we are already on the slippery slope that may carry mankind to nuclear annihilation on a gargantuan scale.

We often hear it said that we live in momentous and stirring times, but to complete the true picture it should be added that we live in bad times. For certainty,

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we cannot sing with Browning's Pippa: "All's right  
with the world!"

Coupled with all this is the psychological, ethical  
and spiritual distemper of the times. Once upon a time  
there were certain intellectual beacons to which people  
instinctively turned for guidance in the solution of  
human problems, but one after another these are being  
extinguished, with nothing to take their place, only  
the vacuum of uncertainty. The only thing we are left  
with is the certainty of change; the only reliable  
doctrine now, it seems, is doubt and skepticism. That,  
in brief, is the gloomy world picture in our time.

Now, let us change the focus from world conditions  
to those right at home, to the North American scene and  
the more specific problems which your cooperatives here  
are trying to solve. How should we characterize this  
land called America, in which for this purpose I include  
Canada along with the United States? What is the dominant  
and pervasive power in our civilization? For certain,  
it is the central and all-powerful position occupied by  
the colossal corporations which dominate our  
existence, and whose control is directed and

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manipulated by relatively few people, a mere handful out of the whole population. Corporate power — that is the towering cathedral of our social architecture, dwarfing all other man-made structures and institutions. America takes its colour and character, not from citizens at large, as one would expect in a democracy, but from giant corporations which hold the destiny of the nation in their hands, and whose influence is felt from the highest council chambers of government right down to the daily fare of recreation and information seen on television screens in millions of homes throughout the land.

My main message to you this evening is this: we in America are witnessing a complete breakdown of democracy under the totalitarianism of private profit; and not only are we suffering severe economic illness from the system, but the quality of life is rapidly deteriorating under it as well. And if I did not think that cooperatives can be an effective alternative to this system, I would not be here with you today.

Now, let me make it clear that I am not condemning all private business as such, for I believe deeply in the mixed economy, and I am aware that the entrepreneur and

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private businessman have done a great deal to help build some of the better features of our society. What I am condemning is the insidious, irresponsible and herculean power of Big Business, especially big international and conglomerate business, business sovereignty held by corporations largely divorced from all community interests and human considerations. I suggest to you that the great enemy of democratic life in your nation and mine is the overwhelming sway of corporate power answerable only to the dictates of money. Its defenders would like to call it free enterprise, but its operation virtually means freedom to enslave for the sake of private gain.

What frightens us, of course, is the fact that this system inevitably leads to greater and greater concentrations of power and sway over larger and larger numbers of people. Galbraith tells us that three American corporations, General Motors, Standard Oil of New Jersey and Ford Motor Company together have more gross income than all the farms in the United States, and the income of GM alone about equals that of the three million smallest farmers

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in the country (The New Industrial State, 1965). Is this the kind of society which the defenders of free enterprise are trying to justify and extend? Surely not!

Now, we as cooperators had better examine carefully the motivating force of capitalism, which is none other than the profit motive, because some in our own camp are getting their thinking badly muddled over this question of profit. Managers may say: Is there anything wrong with making a surplus? Do you want us to operate at a loss? Of course, that's silly; nobody and surely not the members, wants a co-op to try to do the impossible, that is operate continually in the red.

What we must be at pains to explain is the difference between the profit of an ordinary corporation and the operating surplus of a cooperative — they are poles apart! For profit is the end and object of the ordinary corporation, but it is really incidental to the cooperative.

Your Murray D. Lincoln tells us: "Ours is the one sort of business in which you can make all the money in the world and still be a failure. It is also a business in

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which you can break even and still be a crashing success!"

Furthermore, we must continuously emphasize the difference between the two, because in one, profit belongs to the corporation and flows back to investors, while in the cooperative it belongs to the members and flows back to the users.

I inject this rather elementary fact into the discussion here because of the tendency in certain sections of the cooperative movement, as well as outside, to sanctify profit as such, and the failure to distinguish between the profit made by, for example, General Motors, amounting to over a billion dollars in a good year, and the surplus made in cooperative enterprise.

The principal point I wish to make here is that the profit motive has become the great motivating force of our society, the mainspring that activates our lives. We live by the gospel of the marketplace, we worship at the shrine of money, and the ethics of capitalism are actually the state religion of the nation. This is what makes us what we are in North America. It has done

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great things for us, I suppose, in a material and purely physical sense; but it has left us weakened and ill, perhaps gravely ill, in a moral and social sense. I suggest to you that our society is suffering from a grievous malady, perhaps terminal, brought on by the religion of money according to the gospel of rabid capitalism.

Consider for a moment the all-powerful leverage exerted on our lives by the profit motive. No matter how undesirable or monstrous something may be, once it insinuates itself into the metabolism of the economy and becomes profitable for somebody, it cannot be exposed for what it really is and can be eradicated only with the greatest difficulty. Profitability can make about anything respectable — wasteful and vulgar advertising, the misdemeanours of the auto industry, unconscionable speculation in land, flashy funerals, pornography, slum housing — name it, as soon as it makes profits for is baptized and becomes somebody it becomes sacrosanct. Profits can cover a multitude of evils and rationalize an ocean of absurdities.

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Indeed, the Achilles heel of our civilization may well be the fact that our society equates profit-making with social utility and respectability. It is painful to reflect on the extent to which whole sectors of the retail distribution system in our North American economy depend on misrepresentation, falsehood and unethical and wasteful practices; and if you think this view too extreme or overstated, I ask you to consider the way

a consumer is usually served when he or she goes to buy, for example, an automobile, brand-name drugs, or breakfast cereals. Or consider a certain bottled product that some regard as the finest gift of America to the world, even to poor suffering people abroad — things are said to go better with it. But though it claims to refresh the consumer when he pauses, we must not lose sight of the boast that, since it was concocted in an Atlanta drugstore in the last century as a cure for a hang-over, it has made more millionaires and multimillionaires than any other single product in the world.

But it is the social consequences of capitalism run rampant which should be of greatest concern to us here,

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and I wish to examine just one feature at this time. It is the presence of want and poverty in the midst of affluence in our society. Someone who wishes to argue about it may say that poverty is not limited to our society, and therefore cannot be blamed on capitalism. It is true, of course, that the poor can be found almost everywhere, but the strange thing is that an economy that is able to produce so abundantly, is so inept in the distribution of plenty. It seems that the mechanisms of capitalism, which produce so efficiently, somehow or other shut off the arteries of social concern, with results that are well known and all too obvious.

Why, we may ask, must one person in four in North America be a statistic in the records of poverty? That adds up to some fifty million Americans who must be accounted poor — a number, by the way, about equal to the whole population of France. Similarly, the figure for Canada is about five million — and we can hardly be proud of the fact that that is greater than the population of Denmark. A recent report of a special committee of the Senate of Canada says: "Five million fellow-Canadians cry out for action that will free them from the trap of

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poverty". Can we in North America be proud of this flowering of capitalism?

Here we ought to ask if we in the cooperative movement have anything to offer as a solution for the great social evil of poverty in the midst of abundance. If we do not, then what is our mission in society? Some critical observer might suggest that we too can be busily engaged rearranging the very ingredients that make for poverty.

Surely it must be obvious that the existence of a large hard-core of poverty in our midst results, in addition of course to the suffering and hardship of the poor, in the fact that our democratic institutions do not work well. This is particularly true of the educational system. Our schools tend to serve the affluent families in society, to the further disadvantage of the poor. A recent study<sup>+</sup> tells us that a child from the poorest 10th of the population in the United States completes

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+ School is Dead: Alternatives in Education, by Everett Reimer; Doubleday, 1971.

an average of less than five years of school at a cost of approximately \$2,500 in public funds; but a child from the wealthiest 10th of the population goes on to complete an average of one year of graduate school, at a cost of \$25,000 in public funds. In other fields too, for example, medical services and housing, the same glaring inequalities are all about us, standing as a constant indictment of our way of life.

Now, we could talk about capitalism and its by-products like poverty for a long time, but the final question that I have is this: Who, in your country and mine, any longer challenges this system or has any acceptable alternative to offer? If there is any dissenting voice left among us, it is indeed feeble. Writing a few years ago, one authority in the United States said, "Its power (big business) was never greater....its legitimacy is now complete, its acceptance without exception. For perhaps the first time in American history no one any longer seriously opposes the system of big business or questions its enormous economic privileges..."<sup>+</sup>

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<sup>+</sup> Robert L. Heilbroner, in "The Power of Big Business", Atlantic Monthly, September 1965.

Some will argue, I know, that government regulation now puts such restraints on Big Business that it is compelled to have greater regard for social considerations, and thus serve consumers and the public interest better. That is true to some extent, of course, but as we know from the example of the auto industry in recent years, Big Business gives ground very reluctantly and only when compelled to do so.

Others may point out that, since the forces of free and open competition are no longer allowed to operate in many sections of the economy, orthodox and traditional capitalism is a dying system, propped up and artificially supported by public funds and government munificence. To the extent that this is true, we have only sunk to a sort of modern feudalism in which the various corporate dukedoms and principalities are maintained at the expense of a public to which they are not answerable.

In whatever way we choose to view the gaps and inadequacies of the dominant capitalist system, we come smack against the same old questions that we cooperators must ask ourselves: Where do cooperatives fit in all this?

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What answers do they have? What is their future in any new scheme of things?

To answer these questions, let us begin by examining this thing called a cooperative.

### III

#### What Are Cooperatives?

When many of us here were getting into cooperatives some years ago, we did not probe very deeply into their nature. We just felt instinctively they were needed and were good things to join. Nowadays, in the modern spirit of enquiry, we have been asking ourselves: just what are cooperatives? what is the economic theory that supports them? This examination, I have already suggested, is good. Socrates said that an unexamined life was not worth living. In the same way, an unexamined movement is not worth following.

Anyway, let me explain how I see cooperatives, how I think we should understand them. This is my theory: cooperatives are organizations that try to combine the best features of two opposing worlds. In other words, a cooperative is never one simple element, but a compound of different elements, and this is why they sometimes seem to be working with a sort of split personality.

Thus, a cooperative tries to respect the personal freedom of the individual and at the same time protect the interests of the whole group, the members; it combines

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the best features of individualism and collectivism, and it is sometimes torn between allegiance to the two at once. But it still strives to unite the two forces in one organization.

Again, some think of cooperatives as private enterprise, while others consider them more in the nature of public or socialist enterprise. The truth is, they are both, having some features that are private and others that make them resemble the public sector. For example, open membership is a feature akin to public enterprise, and yet the cooperative is surely privately owned by those who are the members.

Similarly, the economist looks at cooperatives and he cannot understand them as economic theory, and for good reason: they are not merely economic but social organizations as well. They are a dualism of business enterprise and a social movement, two things in one, and sometimes two things that are difficult to reconcile, as every co-op manager knows.

Cooperatives, therefore, must be viewed as a sort of happy medium, a half-way house between two warring worlds.

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Once upon a time we used to refer to cooperatives as "the middle way", a term which quite properly tried to project this idea of a dual nature and a dual purpose.

Last spring on a tour of Latin America, I attended a number of meetings of cooperatives, and many times I heard the expression "ni capitalismo, ni comunismo"... neither one nor the other, but something in between, and decidedly different.

It is only when we view them in this way, as hybrid organizations, that we can understand the meaning of cooperatives and explain them to others. Some may challenge you: Why don't your cooperatives do such and such a thing? Why don't they act as other business? The answer, of course, is that they are different, they are put together for a different reason and with a different end in view.

For example, in Canada we are constantly at pains to explain membership in a housing cooperative. We are asked: Is it home ownership? and we say no, not exactly. Then is it rental housing? and we say no, it is not renting in the conventional sense, for a co-op housing member does

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not pay rent to a landlord. Then what is it? and we say it is cooperative tenure, neither freehold nor leasehold, but a hybrid, a cross-fertilization of the two, resulting in something unique and better, we trust, than either. And we call it cooperative.

Here again I would emphasize that, in order to justify their own unique place, cooperatives must not take a posture that puts them in the rôle of apologists for capitalism, but instead must present themselves as genuine alternatives to capitalism, especially capitalism in its more exploitive forms.

It is this view of cooperatives that provides us with an answer when someone asks: What have you to offer to the problems of the world and society today? We can reply: We have something different — business enterprise linked with social purpose; business open to all citizens, yet separate from the bureaucracy of government; idealism yes, but idealism that comes down from the clouds and wrestles with the realities of life, whether credit, food, housing, insurance — what have you.

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It is this distinct identity that provides the justification for cooperatives in today's world and should provide all of us with the dedication to go forward in whatever activity of cooperative endeavour we happen to be engaged.

#### IV

##### Three Requirements for Success

Now, that's all very fine in theory, our critics will say, but does it work in practice? We could reply, of course, by reciting success stories of cooperatives in one country after another, pointing to

the fact that there is hardly a corner of the world where some good cooperatives of one kind or another cannot be found, and some countries there is no longer any question of their value and place in the national economy. They come in all sizes, small, medium and large, yes, and even very big, like Co-op City; they are found conducting almost every conceivable kind of enterprise under the sun; and an interesting feature of them today is that they have been endorsed by governments in every political climate and by international bodies around the world, right up to the highest councils of United Nations.

All well and good, but there is a growing feeling of uneasiness in some quarters that the cooperative movement is unable to overtake other business, that co-ops cannot cope with the colossal problems associated with the new

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era in trade, commerce and industry, the strange new world of cybernetics and conglomerates, and that therefore the only alternative to big capitalist business is government ownership. Well, I am quite prepared to allow a good slice of the economy to pass under control of the public sector, for I think the good economy is the mixed economy, and we in Canada especially are quite happy about the performance of most of our public corporations.

But I am just as firm in my conviction about the need for a strong and constantly growing cooperative sector, in a wide range of economic activities and essential services, in which citizens come together voluntarily in order to control their own economic destiny. It will be good, not only for the members, but for all concerned, the community and the nation at large; and both capitalist business and government should encourage the growth and development of this countervailing power of the cooperative sector — it will be a salutary influence on both and on society at large.

Fine, but how? and how long will it take you to reach that position of strength and influence? our critic asks. Here we come to the main point I wish to make tonight to answer the crucial question: what must the cooperative movement do to make its dreams come true, and to consolidate

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its position where it is now well established? The answers to this question are many — some will say that what is needed is more capital, some will say it is better training of personnel, while others will say that the great need is for publicity and better public relations. Well, of course, they are right, all these are needed; but something more, and let me tell you what I think are the chief needs for greater cooperative development in this day and age. I think there are three above all else:

The first is that indefinable something that we call leadership — the compelling influence of those who can light the spark of dedication in others, who can make people not only dream dreams but act to make them come true. Jimmy Tompkins used to say: "No man is any good until he has seen a ghost." People have to see a vision of things as they might be, and they get that vision from a leader — a Lincoln (Murray D. as well as Abraham), a Kazan, a Coady, a Bergengren, a Cesar Chavez.

Now, I know full well that this talent or power called leadership is a subtle thing and sometimes we have to be

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careful not to confuse it with the strange charisma of the charlatan or the screwball. A reform movement attracts all sorts of people and cooperatives have had their share of fools, egotists and impractical idealists. But still we must recognize the plain truth of a seeming contradiction: a cooperative, like democracy itself, though it depends on large numbers of people, still needs the drive and dynamics that come from good leadership.

What we have to shake off, however, is the popular idea that the leader has to be a superman, and that we must always be in search of supermen to lead us. That is a wrong and dangerous notion. Leaders are not as rare as we sometimes imagine. You have heard it said, "People get the leaders they deserve." Perhaps so, but it may be just possible in the cooperative movement they are not getting the leaders they deserve simply for lack of the kind of education programme that brings out and develops the right kind of leader. The perennial search of society is to achieve rule by the best, and the future of this movement will depend on whether or not the right type of leaders, men and women, can be moved into positions of influence and control. That is no. 1.

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I would put the right kind of management second in the hierarchy of needs. You will note at once that I am making a distinction between the leaders in the volunteer group and those in the management group. We must have both, of course, but the leaders in the management group are so important they should be considered separately. For, having in mind the dual nature of cooperatives, we must have managers that are perhaps rather rare; they must have the expertise and knowhow of good business, to be sure, but in addition they must have the sensibilities required for working effectively with people who are much more than customers. The co-op manager must be a businessman and social engineer in one — and that's a difficult combination to find.

Third, I put what is commonly called participation as the next requirement for cooperative success. In modern urbanized society the average person is frustrated by the big impersonalized institutions which hem us in and suffocate us but exclude us from control. Here again cooperatives must accentuate their difference — they are the only business in which the client or customer is also the owner. Active participation in all forms of cooperative

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organization is a great antidote for the alienation of the masses of people — just as you in the UHF family know so well that participation and decision-making by members make the great difference between a housing project and a housing cooperative. The cooperative can be a community in a way that the project never can.

There is a further imperative need for participation: it keeps in proper perspective the members as distinct from the institution. If people do not participate we are liable to lose our sense of values and begin worshipping the institution, forgetting that no man-made institution is sacred, and it is only people and their good that count.

These three, then, are the keys to cooperative success: leadership, management and participation. If you have all three together in good measure, you have a sure-fire, unbeatable combination, a never-fail recipe for cooperative achievement.

A Further Thought

But perhaps that last statement goes too far, for it may leave the impression that a cooperative is self-sufficient and can get along just fine on its own resources. That would be a dangerous and perhaps fatal attitude for us to take. We cooperators must never be so busy tending our own gardens that we cannot see over the back fence. We must be ever conscious that a cooperative, like every other institution in society, depends on the wider environment for its existence. "No man is an island" — neither is any organization — it is "part of the main", as the poet warns us. Cooperators must be ever alert about their duty to help preserve the climate, especially the social and political climate, in which cooperatives can survive.

You know the dangerous attitude which I have in mind: I'm all right, Jack — the attitude that permits us to be smug and complacent as long as it is our neighbour's ox and not ours that is being gored. Tyrants and dictators come to power because men of goodwill who are opposed to them choose to do nothing.

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What I am saying is that cooperators must be committed men and women, ready to become personally involved when the occasion calls for people of courage to stand up and be counted. The mark of the true cooperator is that he is dedicated, not only to the service of his cooperative and the welfare of fellow-members, but also to the cause of social justice and suffering humanity everywhere. We mustn't seek refuge within cooperation as an institution, because, as we have seen so often in the case of religion, the cause itself may lie crushed and buried beneath the institution.

A little story may help to explain what I am saying. A man from a remote village went with a group of other visitors to see the wonderful sights at Expo '70 in Osaka. When he returned home his friends asked him to tell what he had seen. But he replied sadly: I saw none of those wonderful things, because I had to keep my eyes always on the guide for fear of being lost.

We mustn't be so preoccupied watching the guide that we miss the sights!

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Before closing I should like to do what I perhaps should have done at the beginning, that is, congratulate those who graduate tonight from this course. Recently I came upon a superb statement by that great genius of our time, Albert Einstein. Speaking of what he called "the crisis of our time", he said: "Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society." That can serve all of us as our watchword in life.

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